

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

OCTOBER 2006

OCTOBER HAPPENINGS

Since we are having our annual Halloween Tour on Tuesday evening Halloween night, there will be no October luncheon meeting.

Everyone is invited to join us at the gates of Cedar Rest Cemetery for a night of entertaining historical stories. Volunteer actors will portray deceased Bay St. Louis residents revealing their stories of the past.

After the tour, punch and cookies will be served in the Lobrano House. Hurricane Katrina preempted our tour last year; therefore, the board is making a special effort to make this year's tour a special one. Please come out and join the fun. Donations are accepted and are used to maintain the gravesites and headstones in the cemetery.

Our speaker for next month's luncheon will be Kay Gough of Bay Books, 131 Main Street. A slate of new officers will be presented and voted on at this time. Installation of new officers will take place at the December meeting.

NOTE: THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS A NEW POST OFFICE ADDRESS. IT IS P. O. BOX 3356.



*NILES' WEEKLY REGISTER. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1815. **

Died, on the 11th of April last (1815) in New Orleans, **William P. Canby**, midshipman in the navy of the United States, of a wound received in the action of the 14th December last, between the United States' gun-vessels and the British flotilla, near New Orleans.

Mr. Canby was born in Norfolk, (Va.) in August, 1796, and originally intended for the profession of the law, but fired with the exploits of our naval heroes, his active spirit, at the dawning of the war, could no longer be confined to the routine of an attorney's office; he burned to emulate the deeds of our hardy sons of Neptune, and obtained an appointment, as midshipman, from Commodore Shaw, then

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Editor - Dale St. Amant

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**LOBRANO HOUSE
HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY

10:00AM — 3:00PM

Closed from 12:00—1:00 .

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MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

in command of the New Orleans station, where he served on board different vessels, deserving the esteem of his commanding officers and the love of his associates, until the 14th of December, 1814; when, being in gun-vessel No. 23, under the command of lieutenant M'Keever, he, in the unequal contest, received from a grape shot a wound in the head, which, after a series of the most acute sufferings, closed his existence.

In him the navy has to regret the loss of an officer whose rising merit promised one of its most brilliant ornaments, his family an affectionate son, and his friends an estimable companion.

ARTICLE BY :

Paul Laviolette

Although I have written several books, the one that I am most proud of is *Sink or Be Sunk*, a book about the 1814 naval actions in the Bay of St Louis and the Mississippi Sound. Published in 2002, the book was the result of my five years of research on the battle using the reports and letters of the British and American combatants.

However, there is a personal side to my research that I believe adds another dimension to the book and brings the long ago battles to a relevance to today's daily impersonal reports of servicemen being killed.

My interest in the 1814 actions began long before the work for my book started sometime in the mid-1950's. I was working in New Orleans, and during my weekends off, I explored the history of, what was to me, an unknown city. One of the highlights of anyone trying to peek into the New Orleans past is the old graves in St Louis Cemetery No. 1, and I was a habit-

ual visitor. During one of my visits to the graves in the rear of the cemetery, I came across the almost grass covered slab marking the resting place of a midshipman, William P. Canby. The worn writing indicated that the young Canby was killed in an action with the British on 14 December 1814, two weeks before the initial land action at Chalmette.

I became intrigued. I had heard nothing about the engagement tersely described on the stone. The Battle of New Orleans naval actions I knew about had occurred on the Mississippi River. What was this about? All my attempts to find more information on where and how Canby was killed met with very confused and contradictory answers. Several people told me that he was killed aboard the *Carolina* when she bombarded the British camps at Chalmette. But the gravestone said 'lake' not river and the dates were wrong. I finally gave up. But it did bother me. Here was a boy eighteen years old who died fighting for his country and no one seemed to know who he was or even where he died.

When I moved to Waveland in the mid-70's, I began to hear stories of a battle that had taken place in the Bay of St Louis and of a second battle that took place the next day several miles west off Bayou Caddy. It slowly dawned on me from the dates of these actions that it must have been during the second day's battle that the boy was killed.

What followed were five years of research that resulted in *Sink or Be Sunk*. However, I found no new information on Midshipman William P. Canby. It wasn't because I didn't try. I searched diligently, and while I found out much about the lives of many of the officers engaged in the action, I found nothing about a Midshipman Canby. Frustrated, but wanting to acknowledge Canby in some way, I inserted the gravestone text in

the preface of *Sink or Be Sunk*, but included nothing else.

In early December 2003, a year after the book's first edition was published, I came across a painting on the internet of a naval officer described as a "Lt. William P. Canby." The painting was in the Louisiana State Museum, and upon contacting Thomas Lanham, Assistant Registrar at the Museum, I was informed that the painting was indeed of my lost Midshipman Canby. Best of all, Mr. Lanham informed me that while looking into the files associated with the painting, they found a slip of paper that was a copy of Canby's obituary. The obituary not only included details of Canby's death, but gave invaluable details of his earlier life.

It was a splendid Christmas gift. But I was unable to do anything about it; the book was published. Then came Katrina and all my copies of *Sink or Be Sunk* as well as the vast material and books that I used for my research were washed away by the storm's surge.

Early this year, I received a call from my printer telling me that they still had the set up for *Sink or Be Sunk*, and did I want to reprint it? At almost the same time, I received a call from Thomas Lanham of the Louisiana State Museum. He had heard about my loss and offered to send me new copies of the painting and obituary. He did, and I was able to include them in the revised edition of *Sink or Be Sunk* Appendices. Thus the revised edition contains not only the reports of the two commanders who led the opposing forces in the battle, but what was very important in a personal way to me, a painting and obituary of one of the brave souls who gave their lives in the fighting.

If you would like to have your own copy of Midshipman Canby's painting, stop by the Historical Society and purchase the book. I'm sure you will enjoy it.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There are so many things going on at the Kate Lobrano House right now. Repairs on the building will start soon, and a landscape plan is being developed. Everything in Hancock County seems to be moving in slow motion.

One thing that is not in slow motion is our cemetery tour. The actors are in place and are learning their lines, decorations are being repurchased, and final plans are being made. As you may have guessed we still can use a few guides, and your donation of delicious treats would be appreciated. We ask that if you can give us your time, please do so.

The thing we need most is a large turn out. Please attend the tour on Halloween evening and bring your friends. How nice it will be to get back to our old routine while at the same time helping to maintain our Cedar Rest Cemetery. I am sure that you already know that all proceeds of this tour go back into cemetery maintenance.

Our luncheon meetings have been well attended. Doris Munez, our first vice president, is doing a wonderful job finding speakers.

We are always looking for members to serve on our Board. It really doesn't take a lot of time and is such a worthwhile activity. If you think that you would like to hold an office, please let us know.

I hope to see all of you on Halloween evening and at the November meeting.

Melinda Richard



CEMETERY TOUR 2006

Cast of characters:

Mrs. Charles Taconi, Marsha Favre; **Kate Lobrano**, Melinda Richard; **Miss Alice Moseley**, Dale St. Amant; **Joan Newman Seal**, Linda Lou Nelson; **David Dow Posey**, John Anderson; **Ginger Burke Paradise**, Joan Coleman; **Jean Baptiste Toulme**, Gordon Coleman; **Charles Marshall**, Tim Moseley; **Anita Toca Webb**, Lisa Bouis; **Midshipman William P. Canby**, Paul Laviolette.

AARP MEETING

All Gulf Coast seniors are invited to the next AARP meeting in the Diamondhead Community Center on November 1, 2006, at 3:00 P.M. A representative from The Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center will be our guest speaker. She will have information on fair housing rights for all seniors. Come and bring your questions.



SENTRIES ON THE BEACH

This is the last in a series of articles focusing on the historic houses and buildings which are still standing on Beach Boulevard in Bay Saint Louis. In the immortal words of William Faulkner, like Mankind they "will not merely endure; [they] will prevail."



600 North Beach Blvd.



604 North Beach Blvd.

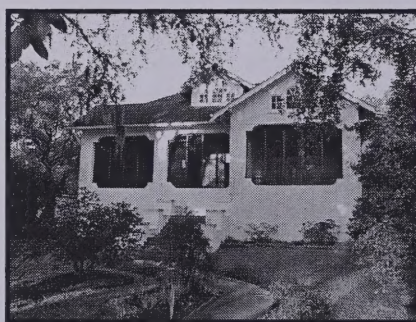


610 North Beach Blvd



Located at 610 North Beach

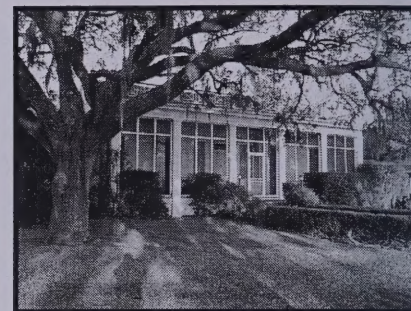
Boulevard, the Worsley/Whitfield Home (above right) was built by



606 North Beach Blvd.



Charles A. Worsley about 1903. After Charles A. Worsley about 1903. After Mr. Worsley's death, Mrs. Worsley's sisters, Misses Zodie and Mina Hunter, came to live with her. The house was then sold to Mrs. M. W. Briggs, who



a projecting gabled porch which is stuccoed and has curved openings. When the house was built circa 1899, it was a shotgun cottage but was elevated and enlarged by Ernest Leonhard in 1928. At that time the porches and second floor were added. The property was purchased in 1950 by Dr. George Battalora, Sr., of New Orleans.



NON-RESIDENTIAL SURVIVING STRUCTURES



A & G Theater



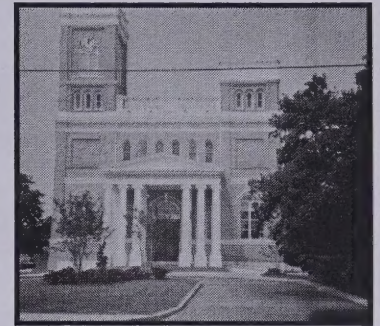
The Gex/Maufray/Thompson House at **600 North Beach Boulevard** (pictured above) was built by Walter Gex, Sr., in 1933 in what is sometimes called "Depression Style" architecture, though it is more properly known as "French Provincial Revival." Alden and Florence Maufray owned and occupied the house from 1954 until 1996. Owner Gretchen Thompson completed a comprehensive renovation including an Art Deco bath upstairs, complete with original black mirror decorations.

The Evans/Glindmeyer house at **604 North Beach Boulevard** (shown above right) was the home of Dr. J. A. Evans. An early picture shows the front porch supported on paired columns set on brick pillars. Later it was enclosed with large glass windows accented with wood columns and balustrades. The house was probably built in the early 1920's.

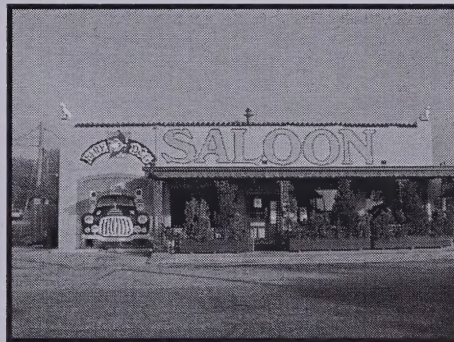
Pictured at right, the Battalora home at **606 North Beach Boulevard** has a hip roof with gabled dormer and



Old Sea Coast Echo Building



Our Lady of the Gulf



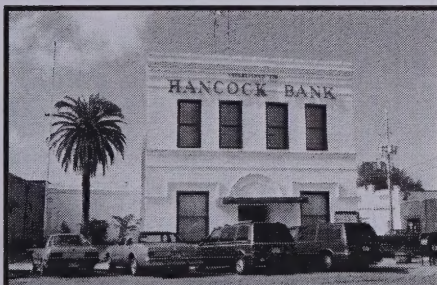
Firedog Saloon



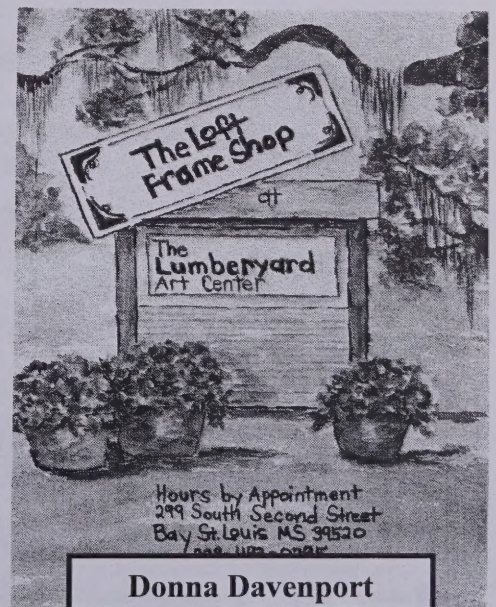
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December 19th—Bellingrath Gardens—\$35.00

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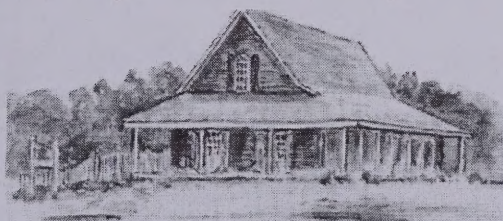
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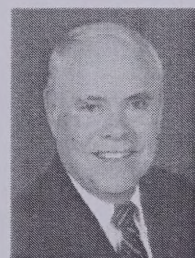
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